

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 3015

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT CH
SUBJ: YEH CHIEN-YING BACK IN THE LIMELIGHT

1. THE APPEARANCE OF PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN YEH CHIEN-YING AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE ON DECEMBER 22 TO MEET DELEGATES ATTENDING THE "SELECTION MEETING FOR TAIWAN PROVINCE DELEGATES TO THE 5TH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS" HAS DISPELLED -- ONCE AGAIN -- WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT HE WAS AILING, OR DYING, IN KWANGTUNG. JUDGING FROM THE NCNA NEWS PHOTO PUBLISHED IN THE DECEMBER 23 PEKING PAPERS, YEH IS STILL CAPABLE OF WALKING UNDER HIS OWN STEAM. YEH JOINED CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG, FELLOW VICE CHAIRMAN LI HSIEN-NIEN AND WANG TUNG-HSING, AND AN ARRAY OF POLITBURO MEMBERS IN GREETING THE DELEGATES. THE MOST NOTABLE ABSENTEE FROM THE AFFAIR WAS TENG HSIAO-PING.

2. DECEMBER 23 PAPERS ALSO FEATURE INSCRIPTIONS WRITTEN BY HUA KUO-FENG AND YEH CHIEN-YING IN CONNECTION WITH A MILITARY HOSPITAL WORK CONFERENCE "RECENTLY" HELD IN PEKING. HUA'S INSCRIPTION READS: "RAISE HIGH THE GREAT RED BANNER OF MAO
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TSE-TUNG THOUGHT, INDUSTRIOUSLY RESEARCH MEDICINE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SERVE THE MILITARY AND THE PEOPLE WHOLEHEARTEDLY." YEH'S INSCRIPTION CONTAINS SIMILAR SENTIFMENTS: "GRASP THE THOUGHT OF CHAIRMAN MAO, STUDY THE WROK STYLE OF NORMAL BETHUNE. WHOLEHEARTEDLY TREAT THE WOUNDED AND CURE THE SICK, SCALE THE HIGH PEAK OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE."

3. COMMENT: THE NET EFFECT OF PUBLICITY GIVEN THESE EVENTS, IT SEEMS TO US, IS TO LINK HUA AND YEH IN THE POPULAR MIND AS PARTENERS AND COLLABORATORS. YEH'S APPEARANCE (COUNTER TO THE WORD RECENTLY GIVEN ROMANIAN EMBOFF'S BY CHINESE OFFICIALS THAT HE WAS "VERY SICK") ALSO RAISES NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF HIS NAME ON THE DIRECTIVE DEALING WITH HEILUNGKIANG'S PROBLEMS. IT NOW SEEMS FAR LESS LIKELY THAT SERIOUS ILLNESS PRECLUDED HIS PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH HUA AND THE OTHER PARTY VICE CHAIRMEN (WHO SIGNED THE DIRECTIVE). CONVERSELY, THE LIKELIHOOD IS SOMEWHAT GREATER THAT THE ABSENCE OF YEH'S SIGNATURE MAY INDICATE YEH'S DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE CONTENT. ALSO LIKELY TO GENERATE CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION AMONG CHINESE ARE TENG HSIAO-PING'S RECENT INEXPLICABLE ABSENCES: FROM THE MIYUN RESERVOIR OUTING, FROM THE RECENT CONFERENCE ON EARTHQUAKE WORK, AND NOW FROM THE CONVOCAION OF TAIWAN DELEGATES.

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